



Regional Water in Montana

February 2009

U.S. Rural Water Supply Act of 2006

In December 2006, Public Law 109-451 was signed into law by President Bush. Title I of the Act authorizes establishment of a Rural Water Program within the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation).

Through this Act, Reclamation is formally enabled to work with rural communities and others in the 13 western states which comprise Reclamation's service area.

The Interim Final Rule was published in the Federal Register, Volume 73, Number 222, on Monday, November 17, 2008. 43 CFR Part 404 is issued by the Bureau of Reclamation "to establish programmatic criteria for the Reclamation Rural Water Supply Program (Rural Water Supply Program) including criteria governing prioritization, eligibility, and the evaluation of appraisal investigations and feasibility studies."

The rule "is intended to define for potential participants how the

Rural Water Supply Program authorized by the Act will be Administered."

A 60-day post-publication comment period elapsed January 16, 2009. The Interim Rule is effective December 17, 2008.

Reclamation has indicated that for the first year of the program, up to \$1.5 million has been set aside for administrative costs, as well as for limited feasibility and appraisal-level studies. However, those funds are included in the budget for Federal Fiscal 2009, which has not been passed by Congress; a Continuing Resolution is in place until the end of March, 2009.

Montana's two authorized projects are not subject to the requirements of the Federal Rural Water Supply Act. However, provisions of the Act are likely to affect both the Dry-Redwater and the Musselshell-Judith regional water projects.

Senator Baucus introduced a

bill to authorize the Dry-Redwater project in mid-2008. Until Congressional authorization of the project is received, Reclamation may use its criteria governing the preparation of appraisal level studies and feasibility studies. The Board of the Authority commissioned a feasibility study which has been completed; it was published in June, 2006.

In contrast, the Central Montana Authority made the decision to comply with requirements of the Rural Water Supply Act, as proposed. The Authority's Board reasoned that this decision would place the Musselshell-Judith Regional Project on a better footing with federal agencies *prior* to introduction of a bill in Congress to authorize the system. The Authority had Great West Engineering complete work on an appraisal-level study report in October 2007. With guidance from Reclamation, the Authority is now in the preliminary phases of a feasibility study.

Congressional Appropriations Updates

As part of an omnibus funding package approved by Congress in December, 2007, both Fort Peck-Dry Prairie and Rocky Boy's - North Central received millions of dollars in the Federal Fiscal Year 2008 budget.

The Fort Peck Tribes and Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority split \$9,840,000. Dry Prairie

received \$2,765,000, and the FP Tribes received \$7+ million.

The Chippewa-Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation and the North Central Montana Regional Water Authority saw an influx of \$5,904,000 in funds for Federal 2008. The Tribe and Authority negotiated a 62-38% split, which is \$3.66 million for the Tribe, and

\$2.24 million to the Authority.

For Federal 2009, Fort Peck-Dry Prairie had asked for \$41.9 million, and Rocky Boy's-North Central requested \$32 million. Committee mark-ups ranged from \$5-\$15 million. Recent news on funding indicates that the lower figures are likely; \$4 million for FP-DP, and \$5 million for RB-NC.



Above: Test well location near Utica, Judith Basin County

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Fort Peck Reservation Regional Water

Construction of the water treatment plant clear wells and washwater recovery basin progressed well during 2008. According to Jim Forseth, Reclamation's project manager for the regional water system, the project is behind schedule by approximately three months. Delays were due principally to problems with achieving the acceptable aggregate mix for concrete. Apollo Construction, the contractor for the project, established an aggregate mixing plant near Wolf Point. Subsequent delays were of lesser concern. Apollo estimates that it will complete the current contract by no later than April 2009. The completion date originally established by terms of the

contract was November 28, 2008.

Plans and specifications for the second construction phase of the regional water treatment plant are being finalized by the Fort Peck Tribes' engineering firm. Depending upon availability of Federal funding, a \$27 million facility, as well as completion of the existing raw water supply pipeline from the Missouri, will be ready to advertise for bids in January of 2009.

Construction of the main water delivery pipelines to the towns of Poplar and Wolf Point could also begin in 2009. Estimated cost of two pipeline segments to those communities from the water treatment plant totals \$15

million. The Tribes anticipate being able to advertise for bids on pipeline installation as early as July of 2009.

Below: The Missouri River intake facility



Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority

Dry Prairie is working with an architectural firm in the design of an operations and maintenance (O&M) building which will be located just within the city limits on the north side of the town of Culbertson. Dry Prairie negotiated with a private landowner for the purchase of several lots late in 2007. The subdivision plat which created the parcel eventually met both local planning and state sanitary facilities review criteria, and was filed with the Roosevelt County Clerk & Recorder's Office. Construction on the O&M facility will begin during 2009.

In other news:

- Dry Prairie reached agreement with the Boeing Corporation for the purchase of up to 400,000 gallons of water per day from the Boeing-owned facility at St. Marie, northeast of Glasgow.
- The McCabe Loop, which extends water mains to several rural customers and to the planned Basin Electric natural gas-fired electrical generating station near Culbertson, was 85% complete as of the end of November 2008.
- Review of plans and specifications for the installation of a third treatment filter unit in the existing Culbertson water treatment plant is nearly complete. Work is expected to be complete by the middle of 2009.
- Dry Prairie and the Fort Peck Tribes are working cooperatively on a project to extend interim water service from Dry Prairie's mains adjacent to Culbertson to the nearby southeastern Fort Peck Reservation community of Fort Kipp.

Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority

The Dry-Redwater organizers saw the introduction of their authorizing legislation near the end of the 110th Congress. Sponsored by Montana Senator Max Baucus, the bill was introduced in July 2008. Although assigned to a Committee in the Senate, the bill saw no other action in the 110th. Through a rules procedure, the bill will be re-introduced by Senator Baucus at the beginning of the 111th.

The Authority worked with staff of Montana's Congressional delegation for over a

to fine-tune draft versions of the bill which seeks authorization of a \$112 million project to serve citizens in Garfield, McCone, Richland, northern Prairie and northwestern Dawson Counties.

Several draft revisions helped to address concerns for the proposed use of Pick-Sloan power, and the involvement of area electric cooperatives for required operating power.

The Dry-Redwater Authority has also contracted the services of a Colorado-based firm

for purposes of conducting initial baseline environmental reviews. Work will include investigation into threatened and endangered species in portions of the project area, as well as identification of wetlands and potential cultural resource sites. Delineation of the preferred alternative pipeline route(s) will assist greatly in completion of these efforts.

We want to take this opportunity to wish the Dry-Redwater Authority success in all of these endeavors!



North Central Montana Regional Water Authority

North Central's engineers — Kadrmas Lee & Jackson/Advanced Engineering & Environmental Services — began developing what they entitled "Interim Service Scenarios" in 2006. The intent has been to identify member entity water systems with significant quality and/or quantity problems which could possibly be solved by providing interim service from other member water systems within the Authority's service area. These interim scenarios would be in effect until the regional water treatment plant is built and new water supply mains reach the affected member entities.

The first interim project which the Authority

has selected is to provide service to North Havre County Water District with interim supply from the City of Havre. About 20 miles of 4-inch pipeline will connect the 2 systems, and the new pipeline, built at an estimated cost of \$2.3 million, will be owned and operated by the North Central Authority.

At the request of the Authority, the State of Montana will overmatch its share, previously determined to be 15% of the total cost, or \$345,000. Commitment of \$1 million dollars of Treasure State Endowment Regional Water System funds to this project will allow the Authority to utilize more of its 2008 Federal

appropriation for the design of future project segments. State grant monies which could be used for the same design work are currently committed by the Authority for other purposes, at least through June of 2009.

Future interim projects may include: service to Riverview Hutterite Colony from the Tiber County Water District; city water to Brady County Water & Sewer from Conrad; interim supply to Sweetgrass from Sunburst; Shelby city water to Devon Water, Inc. via Galata County Water & Sewer District's mains; as well as a number of other possibilities.

Chippewa-Cree Construction Corporation

E mah ni tow wah ki tek nip piy.

"Water gives life to everything."

Cree saying

The Chippewa-Cree Tribe is working with the North Central Regional Authority to purchase pipeline materials for construction of an on-reservation portion of the system. The purchase, for an amount up to \$1 million, will be funded by the Treasure State Endowment Regional Water program.

Right: Site of the proposed regional water treatment plant near Tiber Dam in Liberty County



Central Montana Regional Water Authority (The Musselshell-Judith Regional Water Project)

Central Montana's Musselshell-Judith Regional Water Project could receive a shot in the arm as a result of further studies into possible locations for a well field into the Madison Formation. In recent meetings of the Central Montana Authority board in Roundup and Broadview, Mark Cunnane, a hydrogeologist with Western Groundwater Services, presented updates on his investigative work. PowerPoint presentations proposed alternative well field locations to the planned Utica area

well cluster. These proposals would also tap into deep groundwater from water-bearing strata of the Madison Formation.

In his December presentation in Broadview, Mr. Cunnane detailed four potential well field sites in the Buffalo-Garneill-Judith Gap area, and a fifth on the southern slopes of the Big Snowy Mountains. There are several reasons for evaluating alternatives; chief among them is the requirement by Federal and State funding agencies that reasonable alternatives be

evaluated as a part of the preparation of a feasibility study. Reduced costs of well and pipeline construction also figure strongly into the rationale for further study of additional well field locations.

If a more centralized well field can be utilized, the strategy could save millions of dollars in pipeline construction costs, with smaller diameter pipelines radiating out from a more centralized source. Wells at Utica could provide water to northern areas of the system

Position Opening

Water Authority Coordinator: Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority (DRWA) is seeking a full-time coordinator. Salary range \$40,000--\$55,000 DOQ – benefits: Holidays, Vacation, Sick Leave and up to \$500.00 per month to be used toward health coverage. Based in Circle, Montana.

The DRWA is located in a very rural area of eastern Montana. It covers a good part of 5 counties. It is a public water system that is in the beginning stages of obtaining Federal Government authorization and will require public and private financing to be constructed. Additional information on the DRWA can be found at: <http://www.midrivers.com/~drwa/>

This position serves as the Water Authority Coordinator, responsible for working with the Board of Directors, public entity owners, system consumers and government entities to build a regionally supported, high quality, reliable household drinking water distribution business that will provide a reliable supply of safe and high quality drinking water. This position reports to the Board of Directors, works closely with the Board and does not require supervision of others.

For qualifications, skills, abilities, and education and experience requirements, please see job listing #1114071 through the Montana Job Service office in Glendive. <http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/glendive>

Application deadline: 5 PM, Tuesday, Mar. 31, 2009.

In Montana, two regional water systems have been authorized by Congress and two others are advancing through planning and study phases. When complete, these systems will have a total construction price tag in excess of \$750 million (2008 dollars), and will serve more than 75,000 Montana residents. Whether current water supply problems in areas proposed to be served by regional systems are related to quantity, quality, or cost of treatment, regional systems will bring centralized treatment and distribution networks to communities, water districts and individuals which have struggled with these problems for decades.

Websites of Interest

North Central MT Authority — www.robond.org

Chippewa-Cree Construction Corp — www.ccconstcorp.com

Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority — www.nemontel.net/~dprw

Dry-Redwater Regional Water — www.midrivers.com/~drwa/

Musselshell-Judith Basin Project — www.centralmontanawater.com

DNRC Regional Water Program — www.dnrc.mt.gov



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